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AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER**

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September 7, 2004

TO: Supervisor Don Knabe, Chairman
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

FROM: J. Tyler McCauley
Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **GROUP HOME PROGRAM MONITORING REPORT – LINDEN
CENTER - GARDNER HOUSE AND KENISTON HOUSE**

We have completed a review of Gardner House and Keniston House (Group Home or Agency) operated by Linden Center. Each Group Home contracts with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Probation Department (Probation).

Gardner House is a six-bed facility, which provides care for boys ages 13-17 years who exhibit behavioral, social, and emotional difficulties. At the time of the monitoring visit, Gardner House was providing services for one Los Angeles County DCFS child and five private clients.

Keniston House is a six-bed facility, which provides care for girls ages 13-17 years who exhibit behavioral, social, and emotional difficulties. At the time of the monitoring visit, Keniston House was providing services for six private clients.

Linden Center Group Homes are located in the Second District.

Scope of Review

The purpose of the review was to determine whether the Agency was providing the services outlined in their Program Statement. Additionally, the review covered basic child safety and licensing issues, and included an evaluation of the Agency's Program Statement, internal policies and procedures, child case records, facility inspections, and an interview with one child placed in the Gardner House at the time of the review. The interview with the resident was designed to obtain his perspective on the program.

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services provided by the Agency, and to ensure adherence to the Foster Youth Bill of Rights.

At Keniston, interviews were not conducted and Sections II through VII of our standard review were not completed because there were no Los Angeles County DCFS or Probation children placed in the Group Home.

Summary of Findings

Generally, the Agency was providing the services outlined in their Program Statement. However, the Agency needs to make improvements in various areas.

Gardner House

Gardner House needs to make numerous repairs to its facility; maintain current report cards/progress reports in the resident's file; provide the resident with the required minimum allowance; and provide the resident with the opportunity to maintain a photo album/life book.

Keniston House

Keniston House needs to make numerous repairs to its facility.

Attached is a detailed report of the review findings.

Review of Report

We discussed our report with the Agency's management. The Agency's management is required to provide a corrective action plan to the Children's Group Home Ombudsman within 15 business days from the receipt of this report. We thank the management and staff for their cooperation during our review.

If you have any questions, please contact me or have your staff contact Mike Pirolo at (626) 293-1110.

JTM:MP:CC:gfw

c: David E. Janssen, Chief Administrative Officer
David Sanders, Ph.D., Director, DCFS
Richard Shumsky, Chief Probation Officer
Ronald Ricker, Executive Director, Linden Center
Violet Varona-Lukens, Executive Officer
Public Information Office
Audit Committee

**Linden Center
Gardner House
170 South Gardner
Los Angeles, CA 90036
Phone: (323) 931-5035
License No.: 191800173
Rate Classification Level: 12**

I. Facility and Environment

(Facility Based - No Sample)

Method of assessment – Observation and resident interview

Sample size for resident interviews: One

Comments:

Gardner House (Group Home or Agency) is located in a residential community. The Group Home is spacious and comfortable. The Group Home is moderately maintained, moderately landscaped, and blends well with the other homes on the block. There were no observable safety hazards.

The interior décor provides a home-like atmosphere. The common rooms are nicely decorated. The resident bedrooms are spacious, comfortable, and personalized to each child's desire with posters, pictures, and knick-knacks.

Improvements are needed in certain areas. In the dining room, there are paint splatters on the floor. In the kitchen and laundry room, the floor is stained and marked. In the living room, a window pane is missing. In bathroom number one, the walls are dirty with large cracks. In bathroom number two, there is exposed dry wall and dirty shower grout.

In bedroom number one, there is writing on the bulletin board, the walls are dirty, and the mini blinds have broken slats. In bedroom number two, the walls are dirty and have large cracks. In bedroom number three, the walls are dirty.

The Group Home maintains age appropriate and accessible recreational equipment. There are also board games, a TV, and a VCR. There are books and resource materials, including a computer.

There is a sufficient supply of frozen food, meat, canned goods, bakery items, and fresh fruit. The food is accessible, appropriately dated, and properly stored.

Recommendations

- 1. Linden Center management:**
 - a. Remove paint from the dining room floor.**
 - b. Replace or repair floors in the kitchen and laundry room.**
 - c. Replace the window pane in the living room.**
 - d. Clean and repair walls in the bathrooms and resident bedrooms.**
 - e. Clean the shower grout in bathroom number two.**
 - f. Replace the bulletin board in bedroom number one.**
 - g. Repair or replace the mini blinds in bedroom number one.**

II. Program Services

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interview

Sample size for resident interviews: One

Comments:

The resident meets the Agency's population criteria as outlined in their Program Statement. The resident received a complete initial diagnostic assessment after being admitted into the Agency's program.

The resident has not been in the Group Home long enough to require a Needs and Services Plan or a quarterly report.

The resident is provided with psychological testing, emotional, and developmental counseling as required by the Program Statement. The case file reflects adequate documentation to show evidence of the resident receiving regular individual and/or group therapy.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

III. Educational and Emancipation Services

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interview

Sample size for resident interviews: One

Comments:

The resident attends school. However, the case record does not contain a current semester report card and/or progress report. The resident reported being provided with a sufficient amount of daily educational stimulation away from school and feels that the Group Home provides appropriate academic support.

The Agency's program includes development of the resident's daily living skills. The resident is involved in the planning and preparation phase of meals. Hygiene care is discussed as needed and employment preparation encouraged.

The resident has not been offered the opportunity to participate in an emancipation program.

The resident has the opportunity to work and manage his own money.

Recommendations

2. Linden Center management:

- a. Maintain report cards/progress reports in the resident's case file.**
- b. Provide the resident with the opportunity to participate in an emancipation program.**

IV. Recreation and Activities

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interview

Sample size for resident interviews: One

Comments:

The Agency provides its residents opportunities to participate in recreational activities. The resident expressed satisfaction with the recreational activities and stated that the recreation schedules are followed.

The Group Home utilizes local community organizations for recreational and program resources. The resident participates in planning some of the activities. The resident has free time and is able to participate in self-selected activities.

Transportation is provided to and from the activities.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

V. Psychotropic Medication

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents

Comments:

According to the Agency's management, the resident is not receiving psychotropic medication. This information was appropriately documented.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

VI. Personal Rights

Method of assessment – Resident interview

Sample size for resident interviews: One

Comments:

The resident expressed satisfaction with the Agency and its staff. The resident participated in an initial orientation and the Group Home's policies and procedures are posted. The resident reported feeling safe in the Group Home and that there is no interference with his daily living function.

The resident reported satisfaction with the taste of the food and with the ability to participate in menu development. The resident reported that there is sufficient staff supervision and expressed satisfaction with the quality of the interactions with most staff.

The resident reported being assigned chores to complete on a daily basis that are reasonable and not too demanding. The resident is able to have visitors and make and receive personal telephone calls. The resident is permitted to contact social workers, attorneys, and family members as needed. The resident is able to attend weekly

religious services of choice and feels that the Agency is respectful of all cultural lifestyles. The Agency allows the resident to celebrate holidays.

The resident reported that the discipline policies are consistently enforced and that there are fair and appropriate consequences for inappropriate behavior.

The resident is aware of the right to refuse medication.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for the section.

VII. Clothing and Allowance

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: One

Comments:

The resident has not been at the Group Home long enough to have received the required \$50 monthly clothing allowance. The resident has clothing that is of good quality and of sufficient quantity.

The Agency does not provide the resident with the required minimum base allowance. The resident is able to increase the allowance according to the Agency's behavioral system. The resident is permitted to spend the allowance as without restriction.

The Agency provides the resident with adequate personal care items and adequate storage.

The resident has not been provided with an opportunity to maintain a photo album/life book.

Recommendations

3. Linden Center management:

- a. Provide resident with the required minimum base allowance.**
- b. Provide resident with opportunity to maintain a photo album/lifebook.**

**Linden Center
Keniston House
938 Keniston
Los Angeles, CA 90019
Phone: (323) 936-7656
License No.: 191801841
Rate Classification Level: 12**

I. Facility and Environment

(Facility Based - No Sample)

Method of assessment – Observation

Comments:

Keniston House (Group Home or Agency) is located in a residential community. The Group Home is spacious and comfortable. The Group Home is moderately maintained, moderately landscaped, and blends well with the other homes on the block. However, the TV antenna is hanging off of the side of the house and into the driveway presenting a safety hazard.

The interior décor provides a home-like atmosphere. The common rooms are nicely decorated and maintained. The resident bedrooms are spacious, comfortable, and personalized to each child's desire with posters, pictures, and knick-knacks. However, there are a few areas that need improvement.

In the living and dining rooms, there are spots and stains on the carpet. In the living room, a window pane is missing. In the kitchen, the floor is damaged and marked. In bathrooms one and two, the grout is dirty around the tubs and showers.

In bedroom number one, the wood paneling is badly scratched. In bedroom number two, the hardwood floor and dressers are scratched. In bedroom number three, there are large cracks in the walls and on the ceiling.

The Group Home maintains age appropriate and accessible recreational equipment. There are also board games, a TV, and a VCR. There are books and resource materials, including a computer.

There is a sufficient supply of frozen food, meat, canned goods, bakery items, and fresh fruit. The food is accessible, appropriately dated, and properly stored.

Recommendations

1. Linden Center Management:

a. Repair the TV antenna.

- b. Clean or replace carpeting in the living and dining rooms.**
- c. Replace the missing window pane in the living room.**
- d. Replace or repair the kitchen floor.**
- e. Clean the grout in bathrooms one and two.**
- f. Repair or replace the wood paneling in bedroom number one.**
- g. Repair or replace the hardwood floor and dressers in bedroom number two.**

Sections II through VII of our standard review were not completed because no Los Angeles County Probation or DCFS children were placed in the Group Home at the time of our review.